

[6 December, 2006]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) whether Government propose to give these estates similar tax concessions and infrastructure facilities as SESs;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (e) The Government of India enacted a special legislation namely, the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 (SICA). The main objective of SICA is to determine sickness and the revival of potentially viable units or closure of unviable units. SICA applies to companies both in public and private sectors. The Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), set up under the provision of Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 (SICA) considers revival of sick industrial units registered with the Board.

Besides providing a policy regime that facilitates and fosters growth and development of industries, steps taken for revival of sick industrial units, *inter-alia*, include setting up of Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) and issue of guidelines by Reserve Bank of India to banks for financial support and amalgamation of sick units with healthy units. Wherever feasible, rehabilitation schemes are sanctioned for the revival of the units registered with the BIFR which, *inter-alia*, include restructuring of the capital, induction of fresh funds by the promoters, Government assistance for public sector units, merger with other companies, relief and concessions in the form of rescheduling of dues by Financial Institutions, banks and Government and change of management.

FDI in higher education

1507. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether sensing the keenness of many foreign universities in setting-up shops in India for imparting higher education, Government are planning to open up the higher education sector to 100 percent FDI;

(b) whether Government would attempt to arrive at a consensus by debating the issue with all the stake holders, like universities and Ministry of HRD, and the acadernicia; and

(c) whether Government propose to grant the foreign educational institutions the freedom to determine salaries of the faculty and staff and fixing fees, outside the purview of the UGC?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Government has vide Press Note 2 (2000 Series) dated 11-2-2000 allowed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) up to 100% on the automatic route in the education sector.

(c) A proposal for the regulation of entry and operation, maintenance of quality and prevention of commercialisation of education by Foreign Educational Institutions in Higher Education is currently under consideration of the Government.

Engagement of foreign workers in SEZs

1508. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether many of the newly upcoming SEZ projects face teething problems in engaging foreign workers;

(b) whether many visa applications from Sri Lankan, Taiwanese and Chinese workers/technicians are held up for clearance in the Ministries of Home Affairs and External Affairs; and

(c) whether such delays in the issue of visa for workers and technicians from abroad will have adverse impact on foreign companies, with huge investment plans in the SEZs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) There was only one request from a unit under the Madras Special Economic Zone seeking intervention for grant of visa to recruitment of foreign technicians from Sri Lanka. Necessary clearance in this regard was given by the Ministry of External Affairs.

(c) No Sir. No undue delay in issuance of visa has come to the notice.

Import of vanaspati from Sri Lanka

1509. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state: